

## CHAPTER 4

# PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORTS

A tragedy occurred in the port of Haifa, Israel, December 1990, when a liberty boat capsized at night while returning to USS *Saratoga* (CV-60). This tragedy resulted in the death of 21 sailors. For Personnel men assigned to the ship, this unfortunate accident reinforced the need to be prepared for personnel casualty reporting.

This chapter acquaints you with the various types of casualties and casualty reporting formats. This chapter also helps you in the preparation of personnel casualty reports and provides you with information on what to do after the submission of the initial report.

The use of this chapter as the sole reference is not recommended. Refer to the proper *Naval Military Personnel Manual* (MILPERSMAN), Articles 4210100 through 4210140, and the *Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) Manual*, BUPERSINST 1770.3, for further guidance.

### PERSONNEL CASUALTY REPORTING AND ASSISTANCE

A casualty report is required whenever members of the Navy, certain former members, certain Navy dependents, members of other branches of the armed forces, foreign military personnel, and civilians serving with or attached to Navy commands become casualties.

### TYPES OF CASUALTIES

The Navy considers a person to be a casualty if that person's services are lost due to the following:

- Illness, injury, or wounds of a serious nature
- Wounds received in action whether serious or not
- Missing, including missing in action (MIA)
- Interned or detained in a foreign country
- Captured, beleaguered, or besieged by hostile force
- Death
- Duty status-whereabouts unknown (DUST-WUN)

Casualties also may include families of Navy members on active duty or qualified civilian Navy employees and their family members in a foreign country who are unaccounted for and must be reported together with a complete account of the circumstances surrounding their disappearance or death. The report submitted for family members should be the same as that of active duty personnel, appropriately modified.

Additionally, when an incapacitated individual cannot communicate with his or her next of kin, regardless of condition, the individual is a casualty for reporting purposes.

### REPORTING CASUALTIES

The commander, commanding officer (CO), or immediate superior in command submits a personnel casualty report on members who become casualties. The casualty report is sent by high precedence (usually priority) message.

If a casualty occurs to a member while away from his or her command, the local naval activity informed of the circumstances must verify the casualty. The naval activity will notify the member's command and the Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS), Washington, DC, by high precedence message. The Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) must be included as information addressees. The message must include items ALFA through HOTEL as directed in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100.

The activity informed of the circumstances also requests that the member's command make a complete report. In cases where the member's command is unknown, the naval activity informed of the circumstances must inform CHNAVPERS of the casualty (with JAG as an information addressee). Include a statement that shows the member's command is unknown. Also request that the member's command be notified and advised to make a complete report.

Each casualty report is submitted in a specific format. The 17 items required in a casualty report and identified by phonetic letters ALFA through QUEBEC are described in the next few pages. A complete

explanation of the data required for each item is provided in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100. Since it will be your responsibility as a Personnelman to assist in the preparation of casualty reports, you must make sure the reports are complete and accurate before their release.

Although the likelihood of you becoming involved in preparing and submitting a civilian personnel casualty report is small, you must be aware that the *Decedent Affairs Manual*, NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1, contains guidance on the preparation and format of these reports.

## REPORT FORMAT

Use the following format to report members listed as deceased, DUSTWUN, missing, MIA, interned, detained, or captured. Report these casualties immediately by priority message to the following:

- CHNAVPERS, Washington, DC.
- BUMED.
- Casualty Assistance Calls/Funeral Honors Support (CAC/FHS) program coordinator(s) in the area where the next of kin reside. (Refer to BUPERSINST 1770.3.)
- The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) if the casualty is incidental to naval operations and on all reports of progress in searches for DUSTWUN or missing members.
- The appropriate home port or station, type commander, area commander, Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC), and fleet commanders in chief (FLTCINCs).
- The command or activity designated by the CAC/FHS program coordinator to provide casualty assistance.
- Fleet Home Town News Center.
- Naval Safety Center.
- Judge Advocate General.
- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) - Cleveland Center, Cleveland, Ohio. Use Code JJCS for active duty members.
- Chief of Naval Information (CHINFO), Washington, DC.
- Naval Office of Medical/Dental Affairs, Great Lakes, Illinois.

- American Red Cross, Washington DC.
- Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, DC, //AFIP-CME//.
- Naval Investigative Service Command, Washington, DC.

Submit casualty reports according to the following items, as appropriate:

- ALFA–Name of casualty, rank/rate, full name, branch of service, social security number, designator if an officer.
- BRAVO–Status and duty station.
- CHARLIE–Type of casualty.
- DELTA–Date, time (local time), place, circumstances, and cause.
  - ECHO–Location and disposition of remains. (Medical/dental records are to accompany remains until positive identification is established; thereafter, the records are to be sent to CHNAVPERS [PERS 663].)
- FOXTROT–Primary next of kin (PNOK) and secondary next of kin (SNOK).
  - GOLF–Next of kin notification. (1) Have (a) the PNOK and (b) the SNOK been notified in person by a naval representative (yes or no)? (2) Have (a) the PNOK and (b) the SNOK been officially notified by telegram (yes or no)?
- HOTEL–If the casualty occurred in a hostile fire zone or area authorized overseas pay, enter the date the member commenced current tour. If the member is serving on an extension of a normal tour, the date must be followed by the notation EXTENSION. State if casualty was “not the result of hostile action” but occurred in a hostile fire zone. Enter N/A in all other cases.
  - INDIA–Record of emergency data. Specific date of latest NAVPERS 1070/602 or DD Form 93. Immediately mail copy of this form to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663) separately from the service record and indicate date mailed.
  - JULIET–Death gratuity - - unpaid pay and allowances. Provide name, relationship, and address (if different from address listed in FOXTROT) of beneficiary for death gratuity.

Whether death gratuity will be paid by the member's command or by the disbursing officer at home port or permanent duty station.

Name, relationship, and address (if different from address listed in FOXTROT) of designated beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances.

- **KILO**—Casualty assistance calls. State CAC/FHS program coordinator responsible for designating the activity to carry out the CACP. (Refer to BUPERSINST 1770.3.)

- **LIMA**—Race, religion, and date of birth.

- **MIKE**—Insurance. Insurance policies in force other than Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI).

- **NOVEMBER**—Miscellaneous.

Paygrade (if member is frocked, report paygrade at which member receives pay).

Monthly rate of basic pay and any special, incentive proficiency pay. If entitled to hostile fire pay, report separately and include date commenced.

Total service (days, months, years) for pay purposes.

Number of days unused accrued leave on date of death.

Amount of basic allowance for quarters (BAQ), variable housing allowance (VHA), or overseas housing allowance (OHA) authorized to member at time of death.

Location of pay record and action taken to send record to the DFAS - Cleveland Center.

Total amount of contributions to the Veteran's Educational Assistance Program (VEAP).

Estimated date service record will be closed out and sent to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663). The notation DECEASED or MISSING as appropriate must be printed in large letters diagonally across the bottom left side of the service and medical records cover before mailing. Indicate the words DO NOT OPEN IN MAILROOM on the bottom left side of the mailing envelope. If available, place a copy of the civil death certificate in the medical record.

Medical/Dental Records disposition: Missing member: Mail records to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663) in same manner as service record. Deceased member: Print the word DECEASED in large letters diagonally across the record covers. Affix an adhesive-backed label on which you have typed the

annotation "Upon completion of positive identification, mail this record to Chief of Naval Personnel (PERS 663) Navy Department Washington, DC 20370-5663." A preaddressed envelope should be provided for sending up completion of the identification process.

The previous miscellaneous items under NOVEMBER are required items. Include any additional information you feel (with the concurrence of your command) will be helpful to CHNAVPERS.

- **OSCAR**—Servicemen's Group Life Insurance. Advise if member had SGLI coverage and if a written beneficiary(ies) designation is on file in service record. If so, state the name of beneficiary and the date of SGLI election.

- **PAPA**—Assignment of JAG Manual investigative report.

- **QUEBEC**—Personal effects. Name, address, and relationship of person(s) to whom the personal effects will be shipped.

## **TYPES OF CASUALTY REPORTS**

A variety of personnel casualty reports are required to be submitted by a command as the situation warrants and are listed as follows.

### **Personnel Casualty Report (Death) (BUPERS Report Symbol 1770-4)**

Send the initial personnel casualty report on the death of a member by priority message to same addressees, in the same format, using all the 17 subject categories previously discussed.

### **Personnel Casualty Report (DUSTWUN) (BUPERS Report Symbol 1770-4)**

Report as DUSTWUN members who are not present and whose status initially is so uncertain that the command must first gather the facts to make a proper status determination. While the search is ongoing, the member will not be placed in a missing status. The maximum amount of time that a person can remain in a DUSTWUN status is 10 days from the date of disappearance. Send the personnel casualty report (DUSTWUN) by high precedence message to same addressees, in the same format, and using all or some of the 17 subject categories previously discussed.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Missing)  
(BUPERS Report Symbol 1770-4)**

If you receive information that a person is missing, submit a personnel casualty report (missing/missing in action/and so forth) no later than 4 hours following receipt of information that a member should be placed in this status. Date missing will be the date of the initial disappearance unless other information is available that indicates a more current date.

Submit the report in the same format previously discussed, modified as necessary. Label unknown or unconfirmed information in the initial personnel casualty report message and clarify in the supplemental reports. Include in the message a statement of the status of the search.

Daily supplemental search reports are required unless transmission is not possible for security reasons. Reports must furnish the extent, progress, and other pertinent information that the next of kin may find useful. Search reports will continue until a report is sent stating that the search has been discontinued and the member is:

- a. recovered alive and returned to military control;
- b. reported in a missing status because evidence of death or unauthorized absence is not considered conclusive;
- c. placed in an unauthorized absence status (date of absence will be initial date of disappearance); or
- d. reported dead because remains are recovered or search efforts were unsuccessful but evidence of death is considered conclusive.

Consider conclusive evidence of death when information such as eyewitness statements, circumstances of disappearance, results of immediate search, local conditions, and terrain provide beyond any reasonable doubt that a DUSTWUN category person may have survived. Such conclusive evidence does not have to be based on the recovery of remains since situations may arise that the remains cannot be recovered. If, after immediate search, evidence of death does exist, the responsible command has the authority and duty to submit a report of death. The date of death will be the date the member was placed in a DUSTWUN status unless circumstances indicate subsequent survival.

Once a member is reported in a missing status, the CO is prohibited under the Missing Persons Act (37 U.S.C. 551 to 558) from reporting any further change in

status. The missing case becomes the responsibility of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) or his or her designee (PERS 66).

Within 5 days after a person is placed in a missing status, submit a report furnishing all available details to CHNAVPERS. The report must include the latitude and longitude; distance from nearest land, when applicable; local conditions; extent of searches made; statements of survivors or other members who may have pertinent information on the attendant circumstances; and the opinion and recommendation of the CO about the proper casualty status.

Factors such as remote distances from occurrence and lack of current on-scene information make immediate determination and reporting difficult but do not relieve the CO of the responsibility for submission of the report required for review in determining the member's status under the Missing Persons Act (37 U.S.C. 551 to 558). The CO must immediately report subsequent information on new developments.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Fleet Reserve/Retired) (BUPERS Report symbol 1770-3)**

Report death of members of the Fleet Reserve and retired members of the Navy who are receiving retired pay, including members whose names are on the Temporary Disability Retired List/Permanent Disability Retired List to CHNAVPERS. This action removes their names from the rolls of the Navy Department, closes their records, settles their accounts, and assists the surviving family members in applying for survivor benefits. The CAC/FHS program coordinator or the CO of any naval activity who receives information of the death of the member must do the following:

- Send a personnel casualty report message to CHNAVPERS (PERS 662) with tin information copy to DFAS - Cleveland Center (Code JRP).
- If sufficient information is not available to complete the personnel casualty report, the CO of the activity must obtain and mail or request that the surviving family members send only one copy of the civil death certificate to DFAS - Cleveland Center. The personnel casualty report must contain only items ALFA through GOLF. A complete personnel casualty report using items ALFA through QUEBEC must be submitted for a member who dies after release from a period of active duty during the period necessary for the member to proceed to his or her home by the most direct route following such release.

Contact the surviving family members to advise them of Navy activities available to offer any assistance necessary such as the Retired Affairs Office, Family Service Center, DFAS - Cleveland Center (Code 302), Cleveland, Ohio, and the Retired Casualty Assistance Section (PERS 662), Washington, DC.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Naval Reserve)  
(BUPERS Report Symbol 1770-3)**

Report deaths of retired members of the Naval Reserve without pay, members in a drill pay status, members in a drill nonpay status, and members in the Sea and Air Mariner (Delayed Entry) program to CHNAVPERS, so their names may be removed from the rolls of the Navy Department. This action also closes out their records; their accounts, if applicable, settled; and action taken to assist surviving family members in applying for survivor benefits.

The CO of the Naval Reserve unit where a member is assigned in a drill pay or in a drill nonpay status or the recruiting district of a member in the Sea and Air Mariner (Delayed Entry) program is responsible for submitting the personnel casualty report immediately. If member is a drilling reservist, the CO is responsible for contacting the next of kin to advise them of survivor benefits that are available and offer additional assistance as required. Contact PERS 663 if additional assistance is required.

The CO of any naval activity who receives information of the death of a retired Naval Reserve member (retired without pay) is responsible for verification of the death and submission of a personnel casualty report by message. The CO will also contact the next of kin to advise them of survivor benefits that are available and offer assistance. Contact PERS 662 if additional assistance is required. Submit the personnel casualty report to CHNAVPERS with information copies to the following:

- Naval Reserve Personnel Center, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Local State Department representative when death occurs in a foreign country
- DFAS - Cleveland Center (Code JVP)
- CAC/FHS program coordinator in the area where death occurred (refer to BUPERSINST 1770.3)
- BUMED

The personnel casualty report must contain only items ALFA through GOLF and item OSCAR. Submit a personnel casualty report containing items ALFA through QUEBEC for a member who dies while on active duty, inactive duty for training, or during the time the member is proceeding to his or her home by the most direct route. For a member in a drill (pay or nonpay) status (inactive duty training), report in item BRAVO (1) whether member was scheduled to perform at least 12 drills during the current year; (2) number of drills performed; and (3) state date of last drill performed and provide a point of contact at the unit.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Terminally Ill/Injured) (BUPERS Report Symbol 1770-4)**

A personnel casualty report must be submitted by the receiving armed forces medical command (or the member's duty station if admitted to a civilian hospital) on those members whose degree of injury or illness is categorized as follows:

- Terminally ill (as diagnosed by an armed forces medical officer)-initial report only is required unless otherwise considered appropriate.
- Seriously ill or seriously injured—a casualty whose illness or injury is of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern but there is no imminent danger of loss of life.
- Very seriously ill or very seriously injured (imminent danger of loss of life)—a casualty whose illness or injury is of such severity that the member is not medically expected to survive the immediate 24 hours or whose death is presumed to be within 2 weeks.

Submit the report (initial and subsequent prognosis and progress) by priority message to the following:

- CHNAVPERS, Washington, DC
- CAC/FHS program coordinator, as appropriate, who has cognizance over the geographical area where the next of kin resides (refer to BUPERSINST 1770.3)

The information addressees are as follows:

- BUMED
- Naval Safety Center (if casualty is the result of an accident)
- CNO (if the casualty is incidental to naval operations)

- The appropriate home port station, type commander, FLTCINCs, and other appropriate operational and administrative commands
- Judge Advocate General
- Naval Office of Medical/Dental Affairs, Great Lakes, Illinois
- American Red Cross, Washington, DC

The initial personnel casualty report will contain items ALFA through KILO as discussed in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100. Also refer to the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100, for procedures used when notifying the next of kin concerning terminally ill, seriously/very seriously ill, and injured personnel.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Suicide Attempt/  
Serious Psychotic or Psychiatric Disorder/  
Major Amputation or Disfigurement/Extensive  
Diminished Vision or Hearing) (BUPERS  
Report Symbol 1770-4)**

Submit a personnel casualty report on members who:

- attempt suicide or make other suicidal gestures. Suicide is intentional, self-induced death.  
  
Suicide attempt is an intentional act, causing physical self-harm, where death would have occurred without the direct intervention of another individual.  
  
Suicide gesture is an intentional act, suggesting a cry for help, causing physical self-harm or the intent to cause physical self-harm that would not cause the death of the individual;
- suffer psychotic or other serious psychiatric disorders;
- suffer major amputations or disfigurements; or
- sustain extensively diminished vision or hearing.

Submit the personnel casualty report in the same format as that required for reporting seriously/very seriously ill/injured casualties. Unless the member requests that the next of kin not be notified, notification of the next of kin will be done in the same manner as notification of next of kin of seriously/very seriously ill or injured members. Periodic follow-up reports are not required.

**Personnel Casualty Report (Members of Other  
Branches of the Armed Forces, Civilians, and  
Foreign Military Personnel)**

Whenever casualties occur in a disaster or accident involving personnel of more than one service, the casualty status determination will be made for all personnel involved by the service operating or controlling the equipment, installation, or unit involved. In such cases, and whenever individual casualties occur to personnel of other branches of the uniformed services or civilians serving with or attached to the Navy commands, a Joint Service Casualty Alert Message (Report) will be sent. This report will be transmitted by immediate precedence message to the following appropriate commands and, in all cases, an information copy will be sent to CHNAVPERS, JAG, BUMED, and CNO:

- Marine Corps-CMC WASHINGTON DC//MHP-10//
- Army-CDR USA MILPERSCEN ALEX-ANDRIA VA//DAPC-PDC//
- Air Force-HQ AFMPC RANDOLPH AFB TX//DPMC//HQ AFESC TYNDALL AFB FL//DEH//
- Coast Guard-COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC
- Public Health Service–Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC
- Coast and Geodetic Survey–National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce, Washington, DC
- Civilian personnel–To the government or civilian organization by whom employed (refer to NAVMEDCOMINST 5360.1)
- Foreign nationals training with the Navy-CNO Washington, DC//OP-O6T//
- Foreign military personnel in the Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)–CNO Washington, DC (refer to the U.S. Navy Personnel Exchange Program (PEP), OPNAVINST 5700.7G)

The MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100, contains the correct format for the submission of a joint service casualty alert message.

## **NAVAL DISASTERS**

A naval disaster or accident is defined as a loss of life or injury to more than 15 persons at a specified location, such as the confines of a ship, aircraft, or the geographical limits of a single shore-based activity. The first and most immediate problem in a major disaster is the saving of lives, evacuation of casualties, damage control, and the safety of the ship or installation.

When information becomes available to the news media before the next of kin of all personnel casualties have been notified, many families are distressed and contact CHNAVPERS for information concerning members believed to be involved in the disaster. If personnel of more than one service (or civilians serving with or attached to Navy commands) are casualties, a Joint Service Casualty Alert Message is required as specified in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210100. However, when only Navy personnel are involved in the incident, CHNAVPERS may notify the next of kin before they learn of the disaster unofficially.

All commanders will send a message report of the highest precedence consistent with operational demands to CNO with information copies to CHNAVPERS and JAG listing the rank/rate, name, branch of service, social security number, and status of all personnel who are dead, missing, DUSTWUN, or injured. If an individual is injured, indicate whether it is a very serious/serious or minor injury and any immediate medical evacuation plans.

Commanders must also send individual personnel casualty reports as soon as possible via immediate precedence. In addition, they must send an immediate message as soon as possible providing a list of individuals who are uninjured and accounted for. If records are believed to be lost or destroyed, so state. CHNAVPERS maintains an emergency coordination center that will be activated when a major naval disaster or accident occurs.

## **CASES OF CASUALTIES CAUSED BY HOSTILE ACTS**

When war or hostile action by an organized force results in personnel casualties, notification of the next of kin will be made as directed by higher authority.

During hostilities, or in international or other applicable incidents, records of personnel missing in action will be controlled as For Official Use Only until the member is determined to be dead or returned. Significant details, including biographical data, will not

be publicly disclosed. Service records and flight logbooks (if applicable) of members continued in a missing status will be sent to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663).

## **RELEASE OF NAMES OF CASUALTIES**

Public release of names and addresses of military personnel who become casualties should be withheld until notification of next of kin as stated in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210200. Every effort should be made to release such names and duty stations (addresses) simultaneously with, or as soon as possible after, the release of news of the incident that caused the casualties, thereby lessening the anxiety of relatives of other members who might be involved.

Release the rank/rate, name, and date of birth on those casualties listed as MIA, captured, detained, interned, or beleaguered and besieged. During hostilities, and so long as members remain in these categories, the names will be released only by the Department of Defense.

## **CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CALLS PROGRAM**

The CACP requires that a uniformed Navy representative (an officer with a minimum of 2 years' active duty or a senior enlisted member E-7 through E-9) be designated to assist the PNOK and the SNOK of a deceased member, a member who is reported as DUSTWUN or becomes missing while on active duty, or annual training, or inactive duty training about rights, benefits, and privileges.

Standby casualty assistance calls officers (CACOs) are assigned in all active duty cases when the member is placed on the very seriously, seriously ill or injured list or is in imminent danger of loss of life or is hospitalized overseas away from the NOK. The standby CACO is assigned in the same manner as a CACO for deceased or missing members except that the standby CACO will be assigned through the responsible CAC/FHS program coordinator at the direction of CHNAVPERS (PERS 663). The standby CACO should not contact the next of kin unless directed by CHNAVPERS or the appropriate CAC/FHS program coordinator. Standby CACO duty is no longer than 1 week's duration. Additional information on the duties and responsibilities of a person assigned as a CACO or a standby CACO is provided in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210160, and BUPERSINST 1770.3.

a. Command to which casualty assigned—located outside CONUS

NOK Reside

Who Confirms Casualty by Telegram

Overseas at or near casualty reporting command

Commanding officer

Overseas beyond immediate vicinity of command

Overseas shore-based naval commander nearest NOK

Within CONUS

CHNAVPERS

b. Command to which casualty assigned—located within CONUS

NOK Reside

Who Confirms Casualty by Telegram

Immediate vicinity

Commanding officer

Away from command but within CONUS

Commanding officer

Outside CONUS

Overseas shore-based naval commander nearest NOK

c. Command to which casualty assigned—member dies while en route between duty stations

NOK Reside

Who Confirms Casualty by Telegram

Within CONUS

CHNAVPERS

Outside CONUS

Overseas shore-based naval commander nearest NOK

Figure 4-1.—Conditions and responsibility for confirming casualties.

## NOTIFICATION OF NEXT OF KIN

In all cases of casualties to naval personnel involving death, DUSTWUN, or missing, the next of kin should be promptly notified in person by a responsible uniformed Navy representative between the hours of 0600 and 2400. If the member is hospitalized and listed as seriously/very seriously ill or injured, immediately preceding the death, or if any of the member's next of kin are already aware of the death, the notification will be made in person regardless of the hour.

Under no circumstances will notification of death be made by telephone unless a previous agreement has been made between the family and the attending physician. This exception to the general CACP policy is to be exercised judiciously. At the time the medical officer makes telephone notification to the next of kin, he or she will simultaneously inform the CAC/FHS program coordinator in whose area the next of kin resides of his or her action.

Normal CACP and reporting procedures will be followed after initial telephone contact. The CACO will be advised by the CAC/FHS program coordinator of the previous telephone notification before his or her call to the next of kin.

Every notification must be confirmed in writing either by telegram or delivery in person. If undue delay in notification is foreseen, CHNAVPERS must be notified by telephone. Undue delay is considered to be in excess of 24 hours from receipt of the information of the casualty.

If a ship is in port at the time of the casualty and sailing is imminent or notification impractical, CHNAVPERS will make the necessary notification, if so requested. Figure 4-1 specifies the conditions and responsibility for the confirmation telegram in case of death.

Additional information concerning notification responsibilities is contained in the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210140, and the CACP Manual.



## **TRANSPORTATION OF NEXT OF KIN TO THE BEDSIDE OF SERIOUSLY ILL OR INJURED MEMBERS**

According to the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210110, funded round-trip transportation is authorized for the PNOK and one other family member to visit a seriously ill or injured member, hospitalized in or outside the United States. Such transportation is authorized only when the attending physician and the commander or head of the military medical facility determines, in writing, that the presence of family members is medically warranted and necessary for the health and welfare of the member.

Eligible travelers are the spouse, children (including step, adopted, and illegitimate children), siblings of the member, and parents of the member (includes fathers and mothers through adoption and persons who have stood *in loco parentis* to the member for a period of not less than 1 year immediately before the member entered the uniformed service.) The spouse will be given first option in such transportation and the option to determine the other eligible traveler. The child(ren) will be given the next option. When there is no surviving spouse or children, the member's biological parents will be given the next transportation option.

When CHNAVPERS (PERS 663) is advised that the presence of next of kin is medically warranted, the eligible traveler(s) will be contacted via telephone, issued travel orders, and advised of arrangements made for their transportation.

Cost of food, lodging, and other expenses in connection with such travel are at the personal expense of the traveler. Reimbursement for privately owned vehicle travel is authorized upon completion of travel for the driver of the vehicle only. Reimbursement may not exceed cost of government-procured transportation. Overseas travel must be via an American flag carrier unless specifically approved by PERS 332/663.

## **COMMANDING OFFICER'S LETTER TO NEXT OF KIN RELATING CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY**

According to the MILPERSMAN, Article 4210220, with the exception of personnel missing in action and those cases that the next of kin is criminally charged in the member's death, COs will write a letter of circumstances to the next of kin in all cases of death, missing, and seriously ill or injured active duty members within 48 hours of the occurrence of the casualty.

Exercise extreme caution when reporting the facts surrounding the occurrence and make sure they are consistent with official reports.

When a service member is in transit at the time of a casualty, it is the responsibility of the CO under whom the service member last served to make sure the next of kin is provided with a letter of circumstances or condolence. Should unusual circumstances prevent the writing of these letters within 48 hours, COs should send them as soon as possible. The letter should furnish sufficient facts about the incident to answer all immediate questions of the next of kin. In addition, the letter should not be delayed, pending the outcome of all connected investigations. A supplemental letter may provide any data that was not available when the initial letter was prepared.

This letter must show personal consideration for the next of kin as well as to avoid creation of any impression that the information is not factual. The letter should convey warmth and genuine interest in the person to whom it is sent. Complimentary remarks about the service member's character, personality, or work efficiency oftentimes help in conveying this attitude of concern. The letter also should present information concerning a will or personal belongings. An offer of assistance to the next of kin also will do much to show an impression of genuine Navy interest.

Send a copy of the CO's letter promptly to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663) and to the JAG Investigations Division (Code 33). You must make sure the correspondence always contains the rank/rate, full name, and social security number of the casualty.

## **DISPOSITION OF MAIL AND PERSONAL EFFECTS OF CASUALTIES**

All mail addressed to deceased members is held until the notification of the kin and then returned to the sender via a cover letter from the CO. Send mail addressed to members who are missing, captured, or interned to CHNAVPERS (PERS 663).

Designated individual(s) must inventory the personal effects of a member who is hospitalized and place them in safekeeping until the member returns to his or her duty station. The effects remain in safekeeping until disposition instructions are received from the member or his or her guardian (if member is declared incompetent). When a guardian has not been appointed and next of kin asks for the personal effects, contact JAG (Code 323) for guidance.

In the case of deceased, captured, missing, or interned members, personal effects will be inventoried and clothing cleaned or laundered. Commands must ship personal effects directly to the PNOK by registered mail or via the appropriate personal effects distribution center (PEDC). Include a copy of the inventory list with the personal effects. Ship them within 2 weeks after the casualty occurs. If this is not possible, inform PERS 663.

For information on handling and shipping personal effects, shore commands should consult *Transportation of Personal Property Ashore*, NAVSUP P-490, paragraph 9009.2. Afloat commands should consult *Transportation of Personal Property Afloat*, NAVSUP P-485, volume 3, paragraph 1302.

## **SUMMARY**

As a first class or chief petty officer one of your duties will be the preparation of casualty reports. You must set up a case file containing the initial casualty report message with the letter to the next of kin and any other correspondence about the casualty. Furthermore, you may be assigned the duties of CACO. While dealing with naval casualties is not something any of us look forward to, serious injuries, illnesses, and deaths do occur. You should be aware of your responsibilities in dealing with these situations and know where to find the information so you can quickly and accurately submit the necessary reports.